



Attorney General Jon Bruning

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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Gering Man Arrested for Possession and Distribution of Child Pornography**

**Largest number of images of sexual exploitation of children found in  
any Attorney General's investigation to date**

**Note: A sound bite on this topic will be available shortly at: [www.ago.ne.gov](http://www.ago.ne.gov)**

LINCOLN – Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced the arrest of Thomas Schildt, 28, of Gering on three counts of Possession of Child Pornography, a Class III felony, and three counts of Distribution of Child Pornography, a Class ID felony.

In coordination with the Gering Police Department and Scotts Bluff County Attorney Doug Warner, investigators from the Attorney General's Office Rural Cybercrime Unit arrested Schildt at his home yesterday afternoon. A preliminary search of one of seven hard drives found at Schildt's residence turned up more than 200,000 digital images and videos relating to the sexual exploitation of children. Of those, at least 15,000 have previously been identified by law enforcement as known images and videos of child pornography. Known images and videos are those that have been found during previous investigations and are believed to be child pornography.

"Every time an image of an innocent child engaged in sexually explicit behavior is traded or downloaded, that child is re-victimized," said Bruning. "In terms of sheer numbers of images and videos of child sexual exploitation, this is the largest case our office has seen."

Bruning continued, "We will continue to do all we can to stop predators from preying on child victims from behind their computer screens and put them in jail where they belong."

Since January 1, 2010, the Nebraska Attorney General's Office has conducted more than 100 investigations where computers have been used by suspects to sexually exploit children. To date, those investigations have resulted in 40 arrests and 22 convictions. The bulk of the remaining investigations were either turned over to federal or county officials for prosecution or are ongoing.

Scotts Bluff County Attorney Doug Warner said, "I will do all I can to ensure that Mr. Schildt is held accountable for his crimes."

A Class III felony carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and/or a \$25,000 fine. A Class ID felony carries a maximum of 50 years in prison and a mandatory minimum of three years.

Schildt is being held at the Scotts Bluff County Jail. Additional charges may be forthcoming as the search of Schildt's computers and external hard drives continues.

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